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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

INFORMATION FROM

FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

CD NO.

COUNTRY Soviet Zone Germany

DATE OF
INFORMATION 1949

SUBJECT Political

HOW
PUBLISHED Daily newspaper

DATE DIST. 14 Feb 1950

WHERE
PUBLISHED Berlin

NO. OF PAGES 2

DATE
PUBLISHED 9 Jul 1949SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

LANGUAGE German

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ACKERMANN OUTLINES CRITERIA
FOR AWARD OF NATIONAL PRIZES

A resolution adopted by the DWK (Deutsche Wirtschafts Kommission, German Economic Commission) on 31 March 1949 provides that a "National Prize" will be awarded for outstanding achievements in the fields of science, technology, and the development of new manufacturing processes, as well as in the sphere of art and literature.

In an article entitled "Preparations for the Award of National Prizes," Anton Ackermann, chairman of the Committee for the Furtherance of Intelligence, discusses the origin, nature, and purpose of these prizes and pleads for widespread publicity on their behalf by the "democratic" radio and press.

Stating that "we have no reason to cover up the fact that the principle and methods governing these awards originated in the USSR," he continues in part:

"The award of National Prizes will not be on a zonal but on an all-German basis. The decisive factor in this connection will not be whether a man lives in East Berlin or in its Western Sectors, whether he resides and works in Dresden or Munich, but rather the end toward which he is working, the sum of his achievements for his country, his people, and a truly humanistic culture. Therefore, under the provisions of the DWK, every German, regardless of his place of residence, may compete for the National Prize. This includes Germans who have acquired another nationality in the wake of persecution during the Hitler era but who, in their work and their attitude, have remained Germans.

"Prizes may be awarded for individual scientists as well as groups of scientists and their assistants. In other words, the prize for a valuable discovery may be awarded for individual or collective achievement; an individual actor or an entire ensemble may be awarded the prize for outstanding artistic performance or performances. However, it is undoubtedly within the meaning of Article 23 of the DWK's decree of 31 March 1949 to award the prize for individual discoveries, achievements, performances, etc., as a general rule.

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"In the future, the 12-months period preceding the award will be decisive; award of the 1949 prizes, however, forms a certain exception in this respect. Nevertheless, even in connection with the first prize awards, chief consideration should be given to achievements since 1945, although exceptions to this rule are not precluded.

"It is natural that the Weltanschauung or political affiliation (or even former nominal membership in a party) of a Hennecke activist, master mechanic, engineer, scientist, scholar, etc., will not be a determining factor in the evaluation of his achievements in his special field. However, the democratic public shall have the right to question his attitude concerning the struggle of our people for national existence and independence."

The author poses the question of whether National Prize candidates should be subjected to public discussion and immediately follows it up with his own unequivocal answer:

"Yes, the candidates should and must be publicly discussed. We cannot agree with the opinion of those intellectuals who consider it a degradation or even an insult to be made to figure publicly as candidates for a National Prize which subsequently may not be awarded to them.

"It is a signal honor even to be proposed as candidate for such a prize, whether by an academy of science, a democratic organization, the main administrations of the German Economic Commission and the German Administration for Popular Education, or by a Land government or a workers' assembly. Proposal of a person as a candidate for the National Prize places him within the circle of men and women who have served our people best; therefore the very mention of his name indicates appreciation of his achievements."

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